

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Of claims 1-19 that were pending in the application, claims 1-3, 7, 10-13, and 17 were rejected in the Office Action. Applicants greatly appreciate the allowance of claims 4-6, 8, 9, 14-16, 18, and 19. By way of this Amendment, Applicants have: (a) canceled claims 1-3 and 10-13, without prejudice or disclaimer; and (b) amended claims 7 and 17 to depend from allowed claims 4 and 14, respectively. As a result, claims 4-9 and 14-19 remain pending for further consideration.

1. Provisional Double Patenting Rejection

The Examiner provisionally rejected all of claims 1-19 “under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-19 of copending [U.S. Patent] Application No. 10/830,054.” Applicants respectfully acknowledge this provisional rejection (and the same provisional rejection made in copending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/830,054). However, until the claims of either the current application or copending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/830,054 are allowed, no action is required on Applicants’ part.

2. Rejections of Claims 1-3, 7, 10-13, and 17

Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Examiner rejected: (a) claims 1-3 and 10-13 as allegedly being obvious when considering U.S. Patent No. 5,862,507 (“Wu”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,834 (“Lehner”); and (b) claims 7 and 17 as allegedly being obvious when considering Wu in view of Lehner and U.S. Patent No. 5,507,180 (“Tomisawa”). Without acquiescing to the propriety of these rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot, as claims 1-3 and 10-13 have been cancelled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer, and as claims 7 and 17 have been amended to depend from allowed claims 4 and 14, respectively. Accordingly, a withdrawal of these rejections is both warranted and respectfully requested.

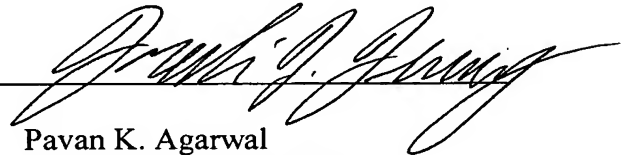
CONCLUSION

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 4-9 and 14-19 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HEREWITH, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HEREWITH, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.